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AUTHOR Pedell, John C.; Busky, Henry F.
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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Human Potential Seminar in bringing about value and attitude changes consistent with the stated objectives of the course. The objectives of the seminar are an increase in self-affirmation, self-motivation, self-determination and an empathetic regard for others. The primary focus of the study is to assess whether the stated objectives of the Human Potential Seminar do, in fact, help students to build a system of values than can be beneficial to scholastic achievement and to develop a value system consistent with their future needs. The Personal Orientation Inventory was administered in order to test three hypotheses developed for this study. This inventory was administered to both the experimental and control subjects prior to any classroom discussion of personal values. The results of the study indicate that students taking the Human Potential Seminar show a significant positive value change when compared with developmental reading students. Awareness of one's value system should enhance one's potential for academic success. (Author)

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Value Changes in A Human Potential Seminar

John C. Fedell, Professor of Psychology, Prince George's Community College, Largo, Maryland

Henry F. Busky, Director of Human Development, Prince George's Community College, Largo, Maryland

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Problem

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Human Potential Seminar in bringing about value and attitude changes consistent with the stated objectives of the course (Trueblood and McHolland, 1970; Mitchell, Reid, and Sanders, 1972). The purpose of the course is to assist students who have reservations about their readiness to cope with a college curriculum. The primary focus of this study is to assess whether the stated objectives of the Human Potential Seminar do, in fact, help students to build a system of values that can be beneficial to scholastic achievement and to develop a value system consistent with their future needs.

Definition of Terms and Assumptions

The Human Potential Seminar is a comprehensive program of analyses which include diagnosis, testing, remediation, and consultation, with the primary focus directed toward students' present and future educational needs. A major objective of the seminar is the identification of values and attitudes that students have toward themselves. In this context, a value is something that either has intrinsic or extrinsic worth to the student. An attitude is a learned emotionalized predisposition that enables a student to act in consistent ways. A need is a want that prompts a student to direct his behavior toward a desired goal. It is assumed that students' values, attitudes, and needs are amenable to change by value clarification teaching techniques.

Evaluative Instrument

A person's value orientation is an organized conception of nature--man's place in it, man's relation to men''and considered to be an important factor in his approach to living. Theoretical and empirical formulations advanced by Humanists and existentialists indicate that a particular value orientation influences a person's ability to give meaning and interpretation to his environment.

The Personal Orientation Inventory (P.O.I.) was the test used to measure students responses to 150 paired value judgment items (Shostrom, 1962). This inventory is designed to provide twelve bipolar measures of personal values in the following areas:

1. Time competent vs. Time incompetent (c)--measures the extent to which an individual either lives in the present or lives in the past or future.
2. Inner directed (I)--independent, self-supportive vs. Other directed--dependent, seeking psychological support from others.
3. Self-Actualizing Value (SAV)--adopts values characteristic of motives of self-actualizing people vs. rejects those motives characteristic of self-actualized people.
4. Existentiality (Ex)--flexibility in the application of values vs. rigidity in the application of values.
5. Feeling reactivity (Fr)--degree of sensitivity to one's needs and feelings vs. insensitivity to one's own needs and feelings.
6. Spontaniety (S)--extent to which one can adequately express one's feelings vs. the suppression of one's feelings.

7. Self-regard (Sr)--high ego esteem and self-worth vs. inability to accept oneself with personal inadequacies.
8. Self-acceptance (Sa)--accepting oneself in spite of one's personal weaknesses vs. inability to accept oneself as having any personal weaknesses.
9. Nature of man (Nc)--sees in man qualities of goodness vs. views man as essentially evil.
10. Synergy (Sy)--ability to transcend dichotomies vs. views opposites of life as antagnostic.
11. Acceptance of aggression (A)--ability to accept one's natural aggressiveness vs. denial of and repression of aggressiveness.
12. Capacity for intimate contact (C)--can develop relationships with others vs. encounters difficulty with interpersonal relationships.

The P.O.I. test can be either scored by hand or machine scored. Raw score values can be profiled on a T scale.

Research Method

The Personal Orientation Inventory was administered in order to test the following hypotheses: (1) Do students who enroll in the Human Potential Seminar have a similar system of values as do students enrolled in a developmental reading program? (2) Do students' scores on the Comparative Guidance Placement Test (Educational Testing Service, 1966) constitute valid criteria for classifying students who can profit from a Human Potential Seminar? (3) Do students reveal a specific profile of values essential in promoting self-actualization?

Experimental subjects (N=45) were selected on the basis of their Comparative Guidance Placement Test scores (C.G.P.T.). Counseling personnel selected students with critical C.G.P.T. scores, students likely to encounter academic difficulty, and recommended the Human Potential Seminar as a suitable program for gaining insight into their existing value system. Control subjects (N=38) were selected from a group of students whose C.G.P.T. scores were at the level that required them to take the non-credit developmental reading program. This group was taught by a reading instructor in a traditional manner, not employing value clarification teaching techniques. The P.O.I. pre-test was initially administered to both the experimental and the control groups during the first week of classes. The P.O.I. pre-test was initially administered to both the experimental and the control groups during the first week of classes. The P.O.I. post-test was administered to both groups during the last week of classes. No other attempt was made to control for such variables as sex, age, and marital status.

Results

The Personal Orientation Inventory was administered to both the experimental and control subjects prior to any classroom discussion of personal values. Table 1 shows the independent means and t probabilities for each group on the pre-test (McNemar, 1955). Comparison of independent means did not indicate any statistically significant differences between the two groups for eleven of twelve scales. For the Existentiality (Ex) scale, however, comparison of the means yielded a significant t value at the .05 level of confidence. Since the Ex scale measures the ability to

Table 1

Pre-Test P.O.I. Mean Scores of Control Group and Human Potential Group

	Control Group N=38		Human Potential Group N=45			
P.O.I. Scales	Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Diff.	T
TC	15.553	2.643	16.467	2.978	-0.914	-1.481
I	79.184	9.196	80.911	11.446	-1.727	-0.762
SAV	18.868	3.071	18.533	3.563	0.335	0.460
EX	18.158	4.320	20.222	4.038	-2.064	-2.235*
FR	15.105	3.152	15.089	2.615	0.016	0.025
S	11.763	2.486	11.844	2.599	-0.081	-0.145
SR	11.947	2.492	11.067	2.948	0.881	1.465
SA	14.421	3.143	15.444	3.525	-1.023	-1.398
NC	10.211	2.353	10.867	2.579	-0.656	-1.211
SV	6.158	1.204	6.689	1.363	-0.531	-1.884
A	15.368	3.542	15.511	3.131	-0.143	-0.193
C	17.500	3.582	17.933	3.158	-0.433	-0.579

*P > .05, $t = 2.00$

situationally or existentially react to the environment without rigid adherence to principles, the higher pre-test score of Existentiality may be a positive indicator of the higher degree of flexibility the students had toward adoption and application of values; hence, their self-selection to enroll in a Human Potential Seminar rather than a reading development course. This finding suggests that an elevated Ex score may be an effective scale for screening students who would benefit from the Human Potential Seminar.

The major classroom emphasis during the H.P.S. is directed toward concepts dealing with human motivation. This motivational emphasis is directed toward assisting students to discover their own value system and to adopt realistic goals that are consistent with such values. The effectiveness of the H.P.S. can be noted from the data in Table 2. Value clarification teaching techniques did have a positive and significant impact on the experimental group's scores on eleven of twelve scales. These results strongly suggest that some kind of cognitive awareness of values did occur during the H.P.S. Impact of the H.P.S. is readily apparent by the statistically significant t values ($P < .001$) on the following five scales:

1. Inner-directed (I)--students tend toward being independent in the decision making process and derive self-supportive attitudes and values from the learning environment (Luchins and Luchins, 1959).
2. Self-Actualizing Value (SAV)--students develop a more efficient perception of reality and have confidence in their ability to deal with it (Maslow, 1954). Since perception is the process

Table 2

Post-Test P.O.I. Mean Scores of Control Group and Human Potential Group

	Control Group N = 38		Human Potential Group N = 45			
P.O.I. Scales	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Diff.	T
TC	15.684	2.820	17.356	2.531	-1.671	-2.818**
I	77.132	14.842	88.711	10.103	-11.580	-4.077*
SAV	18.053	3.634	20.844	2.564	-2.792	-3.973*
EX	18.447	4.983	22.467	4.251	-4.019	-3.913*
FR	14.474	3.006	16.200	3.096	-1.726	-2.571***
S	11.395	2.242	13.000	2.494	-1.605	-3.086**
SR	12.237	2.121	12.778	2.180	-0.541	-1.143
SA	14.947	3.848	16.756	2.997	-1.808	-2.571***
NC	10.079	2.181	11.889	1.716	-1.810	-4.146*
SY	5.605	1.615	7.267	1.236	-1.661	-5.187*
A	15.105	3.347	17.111	2.877	-2.006	-2.899**
C	17.421	4.552	19.867	3.222	-2.446	-2.776**

*P < .001, T = 3.46
**P < .01, T = 2.66
***P < .05, T = 2.00

of giving meaning and interpretation to sensory stimuli, this increase in perceptual efficiency can extend to such areas as problem solving, art and music, and public affairs.

3. Existentiality (Ex)--students tend to react situationally to the environment without undue adherence to principles. In the classroom learning environment, they are more apt to tolerate ambiguity and display flexibility in their application of values.
4. Nature of man (Nc)--students' increased sensitivity toward their own value needs reflect their attitudes about the inherent goodness of man.
5. Synergy (Sy)--students' ability to combine dichotomies into appropriate courses of action.

Mean scores for the experimental group were statistically significant ($P < .01$) from those of the control group on four additional scales: (1) Time competent (Tc), (2) Spontaneity (S), (3) Acceptance of aggression (A), and (4) Capacity for intimate contact (C). These P.O.I. changes are indicative of students' amenability to value clarification teaching techniques utilized in H.P.S. classes. The Self-regard (Sr) scale was the only one in which no significant difference was noted between the groups. The pronounced changes reflected by the results in Table 2 show the extent of changes in personal awareness, strength acknowledgment, conflict resolution, and life style value clarification which occurred as a result of the Human Potential Seminar.

In order to examine if the Human Potential Seminar was effective in bringing about positive attitudinal value changes, chi square values were calculated from pre- and post-test data, yielding independence values

Table 3

Direction of Change on P.O.I. Scales for Control Group and Human Potential Group with Chi Square Independence Values

P.O.I. Scales	Control Group			Human Potential Group			Chi Sq
	+	-	0	+	-	0	
TC	16	15	7	24	12	9	1.61
I	18	18	2	32	12	1	4.89
SAV	14	18	6	32	6	7	12.61**
EX	17	16	5	32	9	4	6.11***
FR	14	19	5	28	5	12	15.22*
S	13	17	8	25	11	9	4.58
SR	19	12	7	29	7	9	3.08
SA	19	14	5	27	13	5	0.84
NC	13	20	5	27	11	7	7.31***
SV	11	17	10	25	8	12	8.32***
A	12	18	8	29	9	7	9.59**
C	17	18	3	32	7	6	9.90**

*P < .001, X^2 = 13.82
**P < .01, X^2 = 9.21
***P < .05, X^2 = 5.99
df = 2

derived from contingency tables (Garrett, 1958). Changes in score values between the experimental and control groups were statistically significant ($P < .001$) on the Feeling reactivity (Fr) scale. Items allied to this scale show the degree of sensitivity one has toward one's needs and feelings. Substantial research has been conducted in the need for achievement, need for power, need for affiliation (McClelland, 1953; Atkinson, 1958b; Atkinson, 1964a; Birney, et al., 1969) to determine the motives that prompt individuals to seek various goals. Research findings indicate that a cognitive awareness and understanding of one's needs and feelings tends to be conducive to good personal adjustment and achievement. Significant chi square values ($P < .01$) were noted on the SAV, A, and C scales, indicating the effectiveness of the Human Potential Seminar in promoting attitudinal changes in:

1. Self-Actualization Value (SAV)--students' ability to differentiate between means to an end behavior from ends behavior.
2. Acceptance of aggression (A)--students' ability to deal appropriately with their aggressive tendencies.
3. Capacity for intimate contact (C)--obligations and expectations do not encumber students' ability to develop meaningful relationships with others.

Experimental group's responses to P.O.I. items were statistically significant ($P < .05$) on the Existentiality (Ex), Nature of man (Nc), and Synergy (Sy) scales. These results are indicative of Human Potential Seminar students' attitudes toward success that is not encumbered by expectations of failure.

Experimental subjects' attitudes were readily amenable to change during the Human Potential Seminar. Table 4 shows the number and percentage of students whose test scores changed in either a positive or a negative direction on the various P.O.I. scales. A positive value (+) was assigned to a student whose P.O.I. scale score was higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. A negative value (-) was assigned to a score that was lower on the post-test than on the pre-test. Zero value (0) was assigned to any scale score that remained the same on both pre-and post-tests. The chi square value ($P < .01$) supports the conclusion that the Human Potential Seminar is an effective program for bringing about attitudinal changes consistent with value clarification teaching techniques. Scores for the control group, on both pre-and post-tests, remained essentially similar; however, scores for the H.P.S. did change significantly in a positive direction after taking the H.P.S. in value clarification techniques (Garett, 1958).

Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the functional utility of the Human Potential Seminar. Results indicate that students taking the H.P.S. show a significant positive value change when compared with developmental reading students. Awareness of one's value system should enhance one's potential for academic success. An expanded value system can be instrumental in developing good personal and academic adjustment.

High scores on the Existentiality (Ex) scale can be used as a valid indicator for screening subjects into a Human Potential Seminar. Because a high percentage of experimental subjects experienced pronounced

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Subjects in Control Group and Human Potential Seminar Group Who Changed in the Positive or Negative Direction on P.O.I. Scales

Change	Control Group		Human Potential Group	
+	16	42	36	80
0	2	5	1	2
-	20	53	8	18
	N = 38	100%	N - 45	100%

$P < .01$, $X^2 = 9.21$

$df = 2$

value changes, the reader of this report should not interpret these findings as indicators of scholastic achievement but as value changes brought about during the Human Potential Seminar.

The findings of this study support the continuation of the Human Potential Seminar at Prince George's Community College.

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